

presence a donkey with an empty sack on its back and asked his permission to let him fill the sack with earth. The permission was readily granted. The Quazi filled the sack and then said to the amazed Caliph, "Please help me to lift it on to the back of the donkey." The Caliph was amused with what he thought to be a joke and lent a hand, but the sack proved too heavy for even their combined strength.

When the Caliph sat down exhausted with the exertion, the Quazi thought now was his opportunity. So he addressed the Caliph thus: "This sack full of earth you cannot lift even with the help of another man, this is only an infinitesimal part of the earth which makes up this ground. How then will you be able to bear the whole of this on the Last Day, when all we do here shall be judged by the Almighty Judge and when rank and power shall not avail?"

These were the days of faith. The Caliph was touched and as an expiation for his high handedness he granted to the old woman the palace which had by this time been almost completed together with all the gardens and lawns and every other thing connected with it.

STORY 86.

MAHMUD AND THE OUTSPOKEN OLD WOMEN.

MUSLIM kings and such others who have imbibed the true spirit of Islam always listened to the outspoken words of their meanest subjects.

Mahmud the greatest conqueror of his day ruled over a vast empire. In those days when the means of communication were not fully developed highway robbery was common every where except when an exceptionally strong ruler held the sceptre.

Even in the time of Mahmud once in a far flung province a caravan was set upon and plundered by a gang of bandits and among others a young man the only son of an old woman lost his life.

The old woman came into the presence of the Sultan and laid her grievance before him.

Mahmud heard her patiently but said, "Mother! You can easily realise that the place where the tragedy has occurred is so far away from my seat of government that it is almost impossible for me to look after every thing there. You see I cannot be held responsible for what is beyond my power to do."

Grief for the loss of her son had sharpened the wits of the old woman. The rebuke that she administered to the Sultan embodies in a short sentence much political wisdom. She said,